

Moses McKay House  
On New Burlington Rd, near Furnas Rd.  
Corwin Vicinity  
Warren County  
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2202

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OH,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20243

## MOSES MC KAY HOUSE

Location: East of Waynesville on New Burlington Road, near Furnas Road, Corwin Vicinity, Warren County Ohio.

USGS Waynesville Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.756450.4381150.

Present Owner: United States Army Corps of Engineers Ohio River Division (Louisville District) (1978).

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant, the Corps originally planned to demolish the structure for the Caesar's Creek Lake project; alternatives are now being studied for the preservation and rehabilitation of the house.

Significance: The Moses McKay House was built in 1818 of brick dug and fired on site. It is a fine example of an early nineteenth century Ohio farm house. The house is notable for its interior woodwork and hand stenciling on the walls. The structure was used by the McKay family as a "station" on the "underground railroad" from the late 1830s through the Civil War.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

The structure was built in 1818 for Moses McKay, a Quaker who originated from Virginia. The house was owned by the McKay family until 1902 when it was sold to Martin and Ann Goode Gons.

During the Gons' ownership several minor alterations were made. According to local sources originally there was a one story modified Greek Revival style portico across the front elevation; all that remains of it is the one-bay hip roof entrance porch with square columns. It is thought that the portico was removed around 1915 and replaced by the current concrete and stone terrace. In 1914 a frame kitchen wing was added to the rear of the house. At an unknown date one of the doors on the rear porch was partially enclosed forming a window.

On the interior, the parlor mantelpiece was removed in the living room. It was replaced with a pillared mantel with mirror. Two fireplaces were closed, retaining only the one in the parlor.

Moses McKay's grandson, Jonas T., was intensely involved in the abolition movement, and operated the house as a "station" on the "underground railway" from 1837 or 1839 through the Civil War.

The runaway slaves hid in the cellar underneath the original kit-

chen. Circular in shape, it was entered through an opening concealed by the fireplace hearthstone. The hearthstone had a beveled edge so it could be easily lifted. A puncheon ladder led down to the cellar. The room could accomodate eight people and had neither heat nor windows. The cellar still remains but the hearthstone and fireplace have been removed.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Interviews with: Mr. Dennis Dalton, Writer/Historian, Waynesville, Ohio, 1976; Mrs. Josephine Gons, 1976; Mrs. Emaline Swindler (descendant of Moses McKay), 1976).

Miami, Ohio.

Miami Monthly Meeting of Friends. Local Quaker Records.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Beers, W.H. The History of Warren County, Ohio, 1882.

The Centennial Atlas and History of Warren County, Ohio, 1903.

Prepared by Charles Parrish  
Historian  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Louisville District  
March 1977

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The house is rectangular in shape with a rear addition. The building measures 52'-9½" (five-bay front) x 28'-2" and is two stories high. The structure was constructed from brick dug and fired on the site. Originally unpainted, the house is currently painted white. There is a gable roof, now covered with tin and three brick chimneys. On the north (front) elevation the house is entered through a central one-bay porch with a hip roof and square columns. The current concrete and stone terrace with railing possibly replaces an earlier porch. The two easternmost bays have a two level recessed porch with a wooden balustrade on the upper level and square wooden columns. The windows were framed by green shutters and had six-over-six lights in double hung sash. Many of the windows contained the original glass. They have since been boarded up.

There is a back porch across three bays on the rear elevation. It has a shed roof and square wooden columns. There is also a one-and-a-half story frame kitchen addition on this elevation.

The house was originally in three rooms on the first floor and had a central

hall plan on the second. The interior contains the original wooden doors, floors and trim, and some of the original hardware. Some of the woodwork has been painted white, but much of it retains its original stained hue. The baseboards are either pine or ash, while the cabinet work and trim are probably of walnut. There is one remaining ornate fireplace mantel; the other mantels are later and simple. In the front room, or parlor, the stairway leading from it to the room above is decorated with fine side paneling extending from floor to ceiling. The house was originally heated by three fireplaces, a huge "walk-in" size fireplace being the focal point in the living room. Also there was a large "working" fireplace in the original kitchen.

Original hand stencilling appearing 1'- $\frac{1}{2}$ " down from the ceiling on the walls of three rooms has been recently discovered. It is in very good condition, having been well-preserved by layers of wall paper applied over it. One bedroom is stencilled with a band of alternating spinning wheels and dark green tulip blooms. Another bedroom wall is stencilled with a dark blue-green ivy leaf. Downstairs in the living room, a chain swag of tear drop design appears in black. It is possible that this stencilling treatment appears throughout the house; if so, it is a feature considered to be unusual in Warren County houses.

The original hewn wooden roof trusses are held together with shaped wooden pins. The random-width rough-sawn sheathing boards are still visible in the attic.

Prepared by Charles Parrish  
Historian  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
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### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the Caesar's Creek Lake Project. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project coordinator. The Moses McKay House was measured and drawn in the winter of 1978-79 under the direction of J. William Rudd, professor of Architecture, University of Cincinnati; Michael Daley, Richard Thomas, Stephen Wiser, student architects. Photographs were taken by Richard Binstadt in December 1978. The historical and architectural written data was prepared by Charles Parrish, Historian, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, in March 1977. The data was edited in the HABS office by Mary Beth Betts in August 1979.